

The toasted jalapeño ravioli is served with a kicky chipotle sauce at the Red White & Brew in northeast Mesa.

An individual grilled pizza is topped with creamy ricotta sauce, diced chicken and peppadew peppers.

Bold all-American

Red White & Brew keeps it fresh

By Cliff Smith

SPECIAL FOR AZCENTRAL.COM

When it comes to variety and quality of food and service, Red White & Brew in northeast Mesa is an all-American winner. Daily specials regularly change, the brick oven for pizza is always fired up, seafood is fresh, and meats and sauces we had were all tasty.

Neighbors are familiar with the 20-minute wait for lunch or weeknight dinner. But be forewarned, if you head there on Friday or Saturday night, the wait could be up to an hour. No worries; the restaurant has a full bar with a few tabletops offering full dining service.

We enjoyed a quiet lunch on the outdoor patio. Not much for scenery, as it looks out to the parking lot, but the atmosphere is upbeat and casual. We had fun with the friendly staff and found that they knew the answers to all our questions regarding drinks and food.

This is important, because as the name implies, they have brew and I had questions.

They serve the local Tempe-based Four Peaks brews, Hefeweizen, 8th Street Ale, and the Kiltlifter Scottish Ale, but I was not familiar with the Thunder Canyon Amber Ale. This turned out to be a perfect afternoon selection, not too heavy, but full-bodied and flavorful. The server later



Take a video tour of Red White and Brew's dining room and get cooking tips from the chef at dining.azcentral.com.

told us that Thunder Canyon is also brewed here in Arizona, and at \$3.50 for a 16-ounce glass, it's a good value. The fruity, tropical iced tea was a hit with others on this warm, sunny afternoon.

The server scored extra points when she salted my drink napkin before placing the beer on it to keep the napkin from sticking to the bottom of the glass. A small touch, but one that didn't go unnoticed.

She made a point to tell us that the seafood is always fresh at Red, White & Brew. That helped us decide on the big city shrimp cocktail (\$8) from the appetizer menu. The five jumbo shrimp tasted fresh, and the tequila-infused cocktail sauce added Southwestern flare.

Our other appetizer choice, toasted jalapeño ravioli (\$8), was pleasantly light on the cheese, and the jalapeños were mildly spicy. Chipotle dipping sauce turned up the heat a notch.

The lunch and dinner specials are constantly updated with seafood



dishes, pasta selections and pizzas. My dining companion ordered the corn-crustured fillet of mahi mahi with a Grand Marnier sauce for \$10. We expected the corn crust to be made with cornmeal and were surprised it was made with whole corn kernels, lightly roasted, on top of the fish. The silky sauce added a sweet taste, with a little zip from the Grand Marnier, and moistened the corn nicely. The



PHOTOS BY DAVID WALLACE/THE ARIZONA REPUBLIC
The shrimp cocktail is served with a tequila-infused cocktail sauce.

fish tasted fresh but a bit too salty. Overall, this meal was a great value.

Pizza specials are creative; the dough is homemade, and the brick oven is always busy. A favorite is the individual pizza topped with diced, marinated chicken breast, creamy ricotta sauce, asiago and mozzarella cheeses, and from South Africa, the sweet yet spicy peppadews (\$9). With the peppadews you experience the flavor first, then the "hotness."

For dessert, cool off with the coppa scacciatella, made with chocolate-chip gelato and chocolate syrup at the bottom of the glass, and topped with cocoa powder and hazelnuts. My companion attempted to eat the huge piece of New York-style cheesecake drizzled with raspberry sauce, but alas, a go-box gave her something to look forward to later. She's from New York, so I trust her when she says this cheesecake is the real deal.

Details: 11 a.m.-10 p.m. Mondays-Saturdays; noon-10 p.m. Sundays. 6740 E. McDowell Road, Mesa. (480) 807-9393, rwbaz.com.



Corn-crustured mahi mahi is topped with a Grand Marnier sauce.